

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of controlling content displayed on a television, comprising:
providing control inputs to said television;
5 displaying content on said television, said content selected in response to said
control inputs by a controller located remotely from said television; and
communicating said control inputs and said content between said television and
said controller via a bi-directional communications channel.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1 wherein communicating said control inputs and said
content between said television and said controller via a bi-directional communications
channel comprises:
converting said control inputs and said content to communications signals
according to a protocol associated with said bi-directional
15 communications channel; and
transmitting said communications signals between said television and said
remotely located controller.
- 20 3. The method of claim 2 wherein said bi-directional communications channel is a
serial bus.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein said protocol is selected from the group including
EIA/RS-232, EIA/RS-422, EIA/RS-432 and EIA/RS-485.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising electrically isolating said television from said communications channel and said remotely located controller.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said control inputs include wired or wireless
5 outputs from a device including a pillow speaker or control inputs connected to said pillow speaker, a keyboard, and a remote control.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising
obtaining said control inputs from an output port of said television;
10 converting said control inputs to a protocol associated with said bi-directional communications channel; and
transmitting said control inputs to said remotely located controller.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising:
15 converting said control inputs from said protocol to a format compatible with said remotely located controller; and
applying said control inputs to said remotely located controller.

9. The method of claim 1 further comprising
20 obtaining said content from said remotely located controller;
converting said content to a protocol associated with said bi-directional communications channel; and
transmitting said content to said television.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising:
converting said content from said protocol to a format compatible with said
television; and
displaying said content to said television.

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11. A system for controlling content displayed on a television, comprising:
a television operative to receive control inputs, and to provide said control inputs
at an output port thereof;
a controller located remotely from said television and operative to select content
for said television in response to said control inputs;
a bi-directional communications channel linking said television and said remotely
located controller;
a first interface unit connected between said television and said channel,
operative to transmit said control inputs on said channel and to receive
said content from said channel; and
a second interface unit connected between said channel and said remotely
located controller, operative to receive said control inputs from said
channel and transmit said content on said channel.

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- 20 12. The system of claim 11 wherein said bi-directional communications channel is a
serial bus.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein said serial bus complies with a protocol selected
from the group including EIA/RS-232, EIA/RS-422, EIA/RS-432 and EIA/RS-485.

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14. The system of claim 11 wherein said first interface unit electrically isolates said television from said channel and said remotely located controller.

15. The system of claim 11 further comprising a source of said control inputs
5 selected from the group including a wired or wireless pillow speaker, keyboard, and remote control.

16. A method of distributing content to a plurality of televisions under control local to each television, comprising:

10 centrally locating, remote from said televisions, a corresponding plurality of controllers;
receiving control inputs at each said television, and transmitting said control inputs to a corresponding controller;
selecting content by each controller in response to said control inputs;
15 transmitting said content from each said controller to each said television; and
and displaying said content at each said television.

17. The method of claim 16 further comprising connecting each said television and each corresponding said controller in data communications via a bi-directional
20 communications channel.

18. The method of claim 16 further comprising electrically isolating each said television from said controllers.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein said bi-directional communications channel complies with a protocol selected from the group including EIA/RS-232, EIA/RS-422, EIA/RS-432 and EIA/RS-485.

5 20. The method of claim 16 further comprising connecting each said controller via a router to a server operative to selectively retrieve said content from one or more content sources.

21. The method of claim 19 wherein said content sources include prerecorded
10 audio/video selections.

22. The method of claim 19 wherein said content sources include the Internet.

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